

REMARKS

Claims 1-5 and 28-30 have been examined and rejected. With this Amendment Applicants cancel claims 3, 29 and 30 without prejudice or disclaimer. Claims 6 and 7 have been withdrawn pursuant to a restriction requirement, and claims 8-27 were canceled by previous amendment. Claims 31-38 have been withdrawn from consideration by the Examiner as being directed to a non-elected invention. Applicants reserve the right to file a divisional application directed to claims 31-38. After entry of this Amendment, claims 1, 2, 4-7, 28 and 31-38 will be pending in the application.

Applicants thank the Examiner for the indication that the 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) rejection of claims 4 and 5 with respect to Yamaguchi has been withdrawn.

Claim Rejections

Claims 3 and 29 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as allegedly being indefinite. As noted above, claims 3 and 29 have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer, thereby rendering this rejection moot.

Claims 1-5 and 28 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as allegedly being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,315,061 to Suzuki et al. ("Suzuki"). As noted above, claim 3 has been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer. Applicants traverse the rejections of claims 1, 2, 4, 5 and 28.

Suzuki relates to a developing roller which is different than the electrostatic latent image carrier set forth in the claims. Suzuki discloses that "the developing roller 20 has a cylindrical base 30 made of aluminum, stainless steel or similar conductive material, and a great number of fine dielectric bodies 32 made of an insulating material. The dielectric bodies 32 are distributed

on and affixed to the periphery of the conductive base 30. Hence, the surface of the base 30, i.e., conductive portions 34 and the surface 36 of the dielectric bodies, are exposed to the outside either regularly or irregularly” (column 7, lines 7-15).

In other words, Suzuki discloses an insulating portion disposed on the upper surface of the conductive layer. That is, the dielectric portions 32 are discretely disposed on a drum including conductive portions 34 that are connected together via the conductive portion of the drum. Therefore, Suzuki discloses a configuration opposite to the configuration claimed by Applicants that includes discrete – non-connected – conductive regions. Suzuki’s configuration cannot form a latent image because the latent image may leak in the continuous conductive layer of the drum. On the other hand, in the configuration claimed by Applicants, charges are injected into the electrically floating conductive layer thereby maintaining electrostatic latent images.

Therefore, since Suzuki fails to disclose at least said electrically conductive portions are independently and discretely arranged in an outer surface of said dielectric layer, independent claim 1 is patentable over Suzuki. Claims 2, 4, 5 and 28 are patentable at least by virtue of their dependency.

Claims 29 and 30 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as allegedly being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,031,552 to Statz et al. (“Statz”). Claims 29 and 30 have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer, thereby rendering this rejection moot.

Claims 4 and 5 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Suzuki. Applicants traverse this rejection.

The Examiner relies on Suzuki for the assertion that it would be obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to modify the reference resulting in the characteristics of a low resistance

layer as recited in claims 4 and 5. As noted above, however, Suzuki does not disclose or suggest a low resistance layer as claimed by applicant. Therefore, even if one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made had been motivated to modify the reference as suggested by the Examiner, the modification still would not result in the low resistance layer as claimed by claims 4 and 5.

For at least the above reasons, claims 4 and 5 are patentable over the prior art.

Conclusion

In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

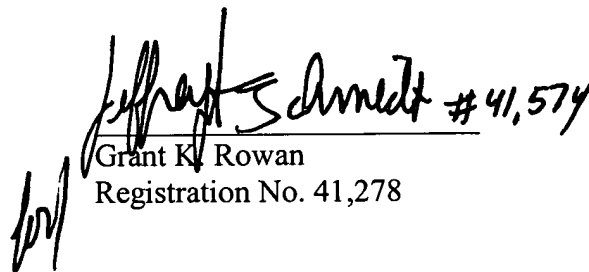
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